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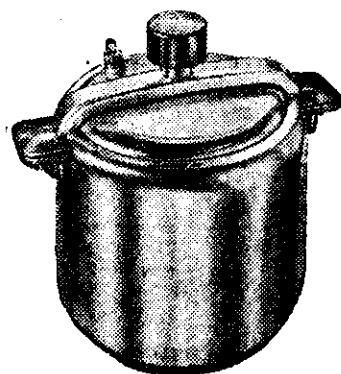
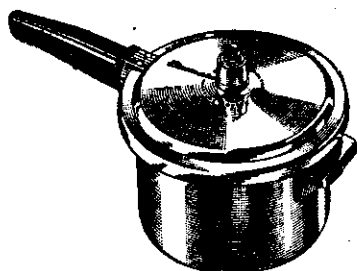
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## CHRISTMAS CAKES AND PUDDINGS

**C**HRISTMAS cakes and puddings are best made well in advance, so that they are matured. The busy housewife is able to relax a little, too, during the holidays, if she has her cakes and puddings in store, and needs only to make fresh scones, stew some fruit and provide the ever-popular ice cream. Cook Christmas cakes slowly in a moderate oven. To make the cake cook with a level top, make a small hollow with the back of the hand in the top before putting into the oven. It is a good plan to spread out all the prepared fruit on a meat dish and warm it in the oven before mixing it in with the thoroughly creamed butter, sugar and eggs. Some people advise mixing in a teaspoonful of glycerine with each pound of butter; others advise the addition of a teaspoon of good curry powder in a pound cake. Both these are to take the place of brandy.

No hard and fast rules can be laid down for baking, for the time and heat must vary according to the kind of mixture, the depth of the cake, and so on. Adjust the heat as time goes on, according to whether the cake is browning as wished. It does not hurt the cake to open the oven carefully and appraise its progress after the first hour or so. The cake may need to be put higher or lower in the oven. A fairly safe rule is to put a pound cake in at 320 degrees, or about Regulo 3 on the gas stove. A pound cake will take from 5 to 6 hours at this temperature. With an electric stove, an approximate rule for a pound cake is to put it in at 350 degrees with the top element off and the bottom one to low. Place it just a little under the centre of the oven.

### Dark Christmas Cake

One pound flour, ¼ lb. each of butter, sugar, raisins, sultanas and currants, ½ lb. each of peel and preserved ginger, ¼ lb. each walnuts and almonds, 6 eggs, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 small teaspoon baking soda, 1 tablespoon treacle, 6 level tablespoons black currant jam (the secret of the cake). Cream butter and sugar. Beat eggs well and add. Then add flour, to which soda and salt have been added. Then work in fruit, treacle, and lastly black currant jam. Grease tin well, line with brown paper, and bake approximately 4 hours.

### Safe Christmas Cake

Half pound butter, ½ lb. sugar, ½ lb. each raisins, sultanas and currants, 5 eggs, 10 oz. flour, 2 ozs. each figs, cherries, peel, preserved ginger, dates and almonds. Mix as usual and bake between 3 and 4 hours.

### Uncommon Christmas Cake

This is not quite so rich, and makes a large, deliciously flavoured cake which keeps moist for a long time. One cup butter, 1 cup fruit juice, 1½ cups each candied cherries and chopped figs, 1 cup raisins, 1½ cups brown sugar, 4 eggs, 2 cups chopped nuts, ½ cup shredded peel, 2 small teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2 teaspoons allspice, 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, 1 teaspoon ground cloves, 3 cups flour. Mix butter, sugar, and egg yolks, and beat for 2

minutes. Sift 2 cups flour, spices, salt, baking powder, and add alternately with the fruit juice to first mixture. Then add fruits and nuts, previously mixed with other cup of flour. Fold in stiffly beaten whites of eggs, put into well greased, papered tin and bake in very slow oven 3 to 4 hours.

### Twenty Minute Christmas Cake

Do not "oil" the butter, just melt it soft. Nine eggs, 1 lb. each of butter, sugar, sultanas, currants, raisins, 1¼ lbs. flour, ¼ lb. each peel and almonds, 1 nutmeg (grated, or 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg), ¼ packet spice. Mix all dry ingredients, including fruit. Melt all butter and let cool slightly. Beat all eggs well and add the butter to them. Then pour this into dry ingredients and beat well till smooth. A wineglass of whisky or brandy can be added if liked. Bake in large tin approximately 6 hours.

### Weewyn's Christmas Cake

One pound each currants, sultanas, seedless raisins, brown sugar, and butter, 1¼ lb. flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, ½ lb. mixed peel, ¼ lb. each cherries and Jordan almonds, ½ teaspoon salt, 10 large eggs, 1 tablespoon rose-water (optional), added last. Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs one at a time, beating well in between. Then add flour, fruit, etc. Bake in moderate oven 6 to 6½ hours. Makes 2 large cakes.

### Christmas Pudding

Six ounces butter, 6 ozs. brown sugar, 5 eggs, 2 ozs. fine white breadcrumbs, ½ lb. each raisins, sultanas, currants and flour, ¼ lb. each citron peel chopped finely and almonds, 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg, 1 gill brandy (optional), 1 small teaspoon baking soda dissolved in 1 tablespoon milk, saltspoon salt. Cream together butter and sugar, followed by eggs, flour and fruit with baking soda. Steam or boil 5 to 6 hours.

### Suet Christmas Pudding

Ten ounces flour or 8 ozs. flour and 2 ozs. breadcrumbs, saltspoon salt, 6 ozs. brown sugar, 6 ozs. finely chopped suet, ½ lb. each raisins, currants and sultanas, ¼ lb. preserved peel, 2ozs. chopped figs, ¼ lb. almonds, 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg, 5 eggs, 1 teaspoon baking powder. Mix ingredients, place in greased basin, fill basin to brim, cover with butter paper. Steam or boil 5 hours. Serve with brandy sauce.

### Family Christmas Pudding

One large cup breadcrumbs, 1½ cups flour, 1 cup shredded suet, ¾ teacup brown sugar, 1 lb. mixed fruit, 1 teaspoon baking powder, ½ teaspoon baking soda, 1 teaspoon spice, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ½ teaspoon nutmeg, 1 teaspoon caramel essence. Mix all dry ingredients in basin, add essences to a little milk (about ¼ cup). Add two beaten eggs to milk and flavouring, and mix all well together. Put into greased basin and steam 3½ hours. Makes a good large pudding.

### Economical Christmas Pudding

One cup each shredded suet, breadcrumbs, mixed fruit, flour, 2 cups milk, 2 level teaspoons baking soda, 1 tablespoon golden syrup. Warm milk and syrup together. Add soda and mix well, and pour over dry ingredients. Stand all night and boil next day 4 to 5 hours.

N.Z. LISTENER, DECEMBER 2, 1949.